AN

HEROIC EPISTLE

TO

SIR JAMES WRIGHT.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

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My fault being nothing, as I told you oft,
But that two villains (whose false Oaths prevail'd
Before my perfect Honour) swore to *Cymbeline*
I was confederate with the *Romans*.

SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON,
Printed for J. BEW, in Pater-Noster-Row.
MDCCLXXIX.

AN

HEROIC EPISTLE

TO

SIR JAMES WRIGHT.

PREFACE.

THE manner in which the late Earl of Chatham was treated at the close of his venerable Life by the Partizans of Government, —the Protest of certain Court Lords against the Provision which the King by the vote of the Nation had made for his surviving family,—with the poor and wilful Inattention of the Crown to the Honours of his Funeral,—convince me, beyond all possibility of doubt, that every subsequent Attempt to lessen his great Character has been in consequence of determined political arrangements, and proceeds from the Envy or Resentment of the present weak, timid, and irresolute Administration.

At the Accession of his present Majesty to the Throne, Mr. PITT, the then ostensible Minister, became the great Object of Lord B—'s jealous apprehensions, and, immediately on his quitting the direction of public Affairs, in some degree, the dupe of his treacherous Influence.—The principles which induced the popular Minister to leave the Helm of Government were too wise, too honest, and too patriotic, not to awaken a thousand Alarms in the Breast of that ambitious Scotchman.—He trembled at the popularity which would attend upon such a resignation, and therefore hastened to obstruct its progress by persuading his Master, perhaps from the most plausible motives, to force a *pension* upon the late Minister, and, by this

 well-imagined

well-imagined Stroke, to prevent that national and more honourable Reward which would, otherwiſe, in all probability, have been then voted to him, and, in gratitude for his paſt ſervices, has ſince been beſtowed upon his deſcendants.---However, the ſame jealous Fears, and the ſame calumniating Spirit, which ſo long and ſo induſtriouſly ſtrove to wound his living Honours, has aimed the poiſoned Shaft at his ſurviving fame: For no ſooner was he dead, than the whiſpering Emiſſary of Slander was ſent forth, and the Tale of Diſhonour propagated with ſo much art, impudence, and perſeverance, that Lord Chatham's Family and Friends thought it neceſſary to publiſh a Juſtification of his Character to the Nation by whom he had been revered, rewarded, and will be for ever lamented.

The little reputation which Lord B—— ever acquired in the opinions of reflecting Engliſhmen aroſe from a political Interview between his Lordſhip and the late *Duke* of *Bedford*, at the entreaty of the latter, when he behaved with a manlineſs of Spirit, and a dignity of Character, which did him honour. But the *Duke* of *Bedford* was a Man whom it was not difficult even for little Minds to deſpiſe. Lord Chatham was of another make and Complexion. ---No man was ever great enough to deſpiſe him; and Lord B——, at the pinnacle of power, and in his braveſt moments, felt his ſuperiority, and feared him.

The Applauſe which He received from his conduct in this well-known Tranſaction might, perhaps, induce him to think that the report of a propoſal of political Connection with him, on the part of Lord Chatham, might be the more readily believed, and, if believed, would gain him two important ends;---the debaſing the Character of that Nobleman by a ſtrong appearance of Inconſiſtency, and the raiſing his own by Lord Chatham's Teſtimony to the merit of it.---But the Bubble is broken; and the Engliſh Nation, in this rare particular, have not been the Dupes of Scottiſh Diſſimulation.

The

The Noble Lord, whoſe name appeared in the News-papers as the Defender of his Father's Honour, however haſty or weak his reaſonings may be, deſerves the praiſe of every ſenſible mind.---My poor teſtimony of Applauſe is with him!---But the dilatory and ineffectual exertions of the ſucceeding Champion merit ſome ſmall degree of leſs applauſive Obſervation.

The account publiſhed by the *Chatham* family evidently proves all that it was deſigned to prove.---Sir J—— W——'s Anſwer to and Obſervations upon it are written with that Labour, Form, and Attempt at Witticiſm, which betray a Suſpicion in the writer that his Argument is none of the beſt. I ſhould imagine ſome friendly Lawyer had given his neceſſary Aid to this boaſted Compoſition;---nor ſhould I be ſurprized if it ſhould appear hereafter that Mr. *Wedderburne* or Mr. *Macdonald* had been concerned in the buſineſs.---However, in ſpite of all Aſſiſtance which the oſtenſible writer may have had, it plainly appears that he was very forward in the matter he had undertaken, and that, on the public diſcovery of the Tranſaction, he had done his beſt to exculpate his Patron, by taking the whole folly of the buſineſs upon himſelf.

What were the particular Motives which could induce Sir J—— W—— to play this ſilly Game are beſt known to himſelf and his Patron.—If they ſhould be of a mercenary nature, the Doubt is ſolved at once: but, perhaps, another Solution of the Enigma, if it is one, may be found in the reflection, that it is the Nature of certain Characters, whoſe fortune in Life has tranſcended their moſt ambitious Expectations, to derive great importance from the moſt trifling circumſtances.---To be employed, therefore, in a Kind of Embaſſy which had for its Object a political Union of a Nobleman of the greateſt Talents with one of the higheſt Court Influence, though there might not be the moſt diſtant probability of Succeſs, would certainly be a moſt elevating circumſtance to a perſon of *low birth* and *great vanity*.---Nor am I, like many others, in the leaſt ſurprized,

ſurprized, that a Man of very moderate Talents, and of no higher rank than a Groom of the Bedchamber, ſhould be appointed Negotiator by the Northern Lord:—Such a man, by being, in a great degree, at his mercy, muſt be pliant to his will; and, in the Hour of Detection, would prove an eaſy ſacrifice*.

If Lord Chatham had lived, I doubt not but he would have retrieved our fallen Honour, and reſtored us, to ſome degree at leaſt, of that National Splendor which is no more.—To what baleful Influence, or to what fatal Cauſes, ENGLAND owes her preſent diſgrace and danger, it is not my buſineſs now to enquire.—I ſhall only obſerve, and a deep Sigh eſcapes me as I make the Obſervation, that, from the ſtrides of arbitrary power, the boldneſs of Corruption, and the Inſenſibility of the people, this Country has loſt, with much of its proſperity, one *half* of its Freedom.---*Civil Liberty*, indeed, as yet, remains;---but *Political Liberty*, I fear, is gone for ever!

* I would not be thought to ſuppoſe that any office about the perſon of the King is in itſelf diſgraceful, or that by being in ſuch an Employment a Man is rendered unfit for any other.—A Groom of the Bedchamber, now a Peer of the Realm, ſome years ago brought about a pacification among the divided and *inveterate* parts of the *Grenville* Family, and united them in the ſervice of Government. But the Talents which he poſſeſſed, and the art of pleaſing which was ſo peculiar to him,—were *his* qualifications for the Undertaking;—and, difficult as it was, he ſucceeded in it.—The Nobleman I allude to is the preſent *Earl* of *Briſtol*.

AN

AN

HEROIC EPISTLE,

&c.

KNIGHT, Broker*, Patriot! by whatever name
You look for present pence, or future fame,
Accept the willing tribute of the Muse,
Who to such blended worth can ne'er refuse

* A *Broker*, according to *Shakespeare's* definition, is a Man who deals in Old Household Goods, *Pictures*, &c.—I flatter myself, therefore, that the *well-instructed* Reader will acquit me of the Guilt of Misapplication.

To weave the freſheſt flow'rets and entwine
The blooming Garland round an head like thine;
While, with no venal voice, ſhe ſhall impart
Her faithful Councils to your feeling Heart.
Truth will direct her Lay, nor ſhall ſhe pain
Thy honeſt boſom with a flattering ſtrain.

How hard, 'midſt erring mortals, 'tis to find
One candid Spirit to each Object blind
Of ſordid Int'reſt, and who looks to ſtray
But where true Honour marks the thorny way!
Whoſe daring thoughts and wiſhes nobly roam
Beyond the Suburbs of his native home,
And, in one animated graſp, embrace
His friends, his Country, and the human race;
Unmov'd by perils, but by death ſubdu'd,
Urg'd by the Godlike Hopes of doing good.

Such

Such were the Knights of old, when Knighthood wore
Thoſe well-won Trophies which are ſeen no more:
When, by the Love of ſacred fame inſpir'd,
By Kings encourag'd, and by Beauty fir'd,
The youthful Hero took his ardent way,
And robb'd the Griffin Paſſion of his prey;
Protected helpleſs Innocence, and gave
Death to the Tyrant, Freedom to the Slave;
And ſought a glorious Fate, or liv'd renown'd,
By Kings rewarded, and by Beauty crown'd.
No ſordid Treaſures to his home he bore;
The wreath which Love and Glory gave he wore:
His batter'd Arms and deep-indented Scars,
Won 'mid the Toil of honourable wars,
Confirm'd his Glory, and enroll'd his Name
In the bright Annals of recording Fame.
Not ſuch the Titles of our modern Times,
When men, inſtead of Virtues, for their crimes,

Some pliant buſineſs, or ſome paltry Trade,
Are Knights and Miniſters* and Nobles made.
Honour is now the Moon-ſtruck Madman's Theme;—
The valiant Stripling ſees him in a Dream,
But 'waking, he is gone!—The Love of Self,
Of empty titles, and of ſolid pelf,
Supplies his place, and th'ill-gotten fee
Buys the beſt rights of modern Chivalry.

You ſmile, my Knight, and think the Madman's rage
Spits forth its foamings on this idle page.
You'll tell me that the noble Brothers bore
The brighteſt Honour from the Northern ſhore;
That Honour penn'd the orders which controul'd
The Zeal for fight and Courage of the bold,

* This melancholy truth may, I fear, be, with equal Juſtice, applied to Miniſters of all denominations, but its immediate relation is only meant to extend to the *Corps diplomatique*. Sir J—— W—— well knows that a ſuppoſed Knowledge *in the Trade of Picture-dealing* has been conſidered as an eſſential Qualification in a Miniſter appointed to an *Italian* Republic;—and that his buſineſs there was not ſo much to enquire into the ſecrets of the cabinet abroad, as to purchaſe Decorations for his Maſter's Cabinet at home.

And ſav'd the daring Navy of the Foe
From the quick ruin of the depths below:
That, late return'd from its excurſive flights
'Mid the camp's gay alarms and ſoft delights,
It takes its common poſt, well-pleas'd to wait,
In meek Submiſſion, at St. James's Gate:
There ſmiles importance, and expands its Wings
O'er Kings and Footmen, and the Slaves of Kings.
'Twas there you bow'd, and with ſome little Skill
In what is painting well or painting ill,
You crept, with ſilent pace, amid the Band
That bears the Banner of the Bloody Hand.
The new, the ruddy Emblem of your State
Glows on your Coach, and bluſhes at your Gate.
Engrav'd with curious art, and made more bright,
Your *Jorden* is the *Jorden of a Knight*:
And, in the Village-walk, the Echo teems
With your new title,—and *returns* Sir James!

—Theſe, theſe are trifles, and afford at beſt
An idle ſubject for a merry Jeſt.
But why exert your ſkill and try your art
To paint the BLOODY HAND upon your HEART?
'Tis this awakes my pen, and will prolong
The honeſt rage of my unpoliſh'd ſong.

Honour's a ſacred name, to Truth ally'd,
The ſtubborn foe of Cowardice and Pride;
Friend to the virtuous, whereſoe'er they dwell,
Or in the gilded dome or lonely cell:
Nor quits them dead;—but, to his Nature juſt,
Guards from polluting hands their ſacred duſt.
E'en now, deſpiſing ev'ry titled ſlave,
He weeps, in ſilence, over CHATHAM's Grave.
—Behold his ſplendid Form, in ſorrow drown'd,
With darkſome Yew and baleful Cypreſs crown'd;

While

While from his flowing Eyes the dropping tear
Waters the Laurel he has planted there!
There ſhall it flouriſh, in eternal bloom,
And ſhroud, in verdant pride, the holy tomb.
—Here could I weep, but that reſentment dries
The briny ſtreams which ſorrow's tide ſupplies;
A fix'd and ſtern reſentment againſt thoſe,
Who, foes to *Britain*, are her *Chatham*'s Foes;
And, ſtung with Envy, or with ſelfiſh aim,
Strove with foul whiſp'rings to pollute his fame.

How loſt to ſhame!—how free from all pretence
To Honour, Juſtice, Truth, and common ſenſe,
Muſt that Man be who wiſhes to controul
The juſt emotions, in his conſcious ſoul,
Which urge, with gen'rous force, the homage due
To worth ſuperior—to the noble few,
Who,

Who, true to honour and its ſacred Laws,
Live, fight, and die, in that forſaken cauſe!
—Yet ſuch there are, who never yet were known
To look on any Merit but their own;
Who, ſway'd by Int'reſt, or inflam'd by Pride,
Ne'er ſaw the worth they did not wiſh to hide;
And with the ſame foul jaundic'd Eye behold
The rich, the wiſe, the virtuous, and the bold:
While ſome, leſs brave, more ſubtle arts employ,
Praiſe but to damn, and flatter to deſtroy!
—Yes, ſuch there are——But if there ſhould ariſe
Some Giant Merit, whoſe ſtupendous ſize
Would awe and ſtill at once the hiſſing croud,
Make the proud humble, and the humble proud;
And, form'd to give a mighty Nation Laws,
Should, by his Virtues, win the world's Applauſe;
And, crown'd with fame and patriot glory, prove
The firſt great Object of his Country's Love——

Should

Should such an one arise—aghast they fly,
And in their filthy dens in secret lie;
Or take some Courtier's form, and patient wait
Till the sure, all-controuling Hand of Fate
Shall lay him low:—Then how the cowards brave
That after-fame which lives beyond the Grave;
With sacrilegious Joy pronounce his doom,
And spit their Venom on his rev'rend Tomb!

Such have I seen; and, 'mid the worthless Crew,
It griev'd me to behold a Knight like You.
I saw the terrors of your *bloody hand*;
I heard the SCOTCHMAN give his proud command;
I saw you, shrouded in *rebellious plaid*,
Hie to the Tomb where CHATHAM's bones are laid;—
Drawn from your breast the *treach'rous Dirk* appear'd,
When, lo! her angry form *Britannia* rear'd,

And drove you disappointed back, to woo
Forgiveneſs of the *Lord* of *Luton-Hoo*.

---Say, was it love of ſhow, or want of pelf,
That made you thus a Traitor to yourſelf?
The deed's but poorly paid, tho' it enſure
The ſilver Star, or golden Sinecure.
---Was promis'd Honour the inviting bait,
Which tempted you to trifle with the State?---
Honour is often coy,---tho' Kings accord
The blazon'd Patent which creates a Lord.
---If to be known was your high-minded aim,
Rejoice, Sir J---s! for while accurſing Fame
Can blow her trump, you ne'er will be forgot,
---*Tha pliant Engine of a treach'rous Scot.*
---Thus the bold Fool, who, to ſecure a name,
To DIAN's Temple bore th' unwilling flame,

Obtain'd

Obtain'd his end;—for, to his purpose true,
Fame gave the meed to frantic folly due.

Dup'd, disappointed, ev'ry scheme unveil'd,
Without deserted, and within assail'd
By keen vexation's smart;—compell'd to fly
To that Tribunal which detests a Lie;—
What for your future Comfort can remain,
But cold Compassion's miserable strain,
That makes the mind a quicker anguish feel,
And wounds more deeply, where it strives to heal!
—Leave, then, Ambition,—aim not to assume
An higher Office than a Royal Groom;
Content that twice a Year your Eyes will see
The common dressing-room of Majesty;
Too happy that the royal Lace expands *
Its ruffled Beauties o'er your honour'd hands;

* The King's Lace, Linen, &c. are yearly divided, by Lot, among the Grooms of the Bedchamber. The consequence derived from the wearing of royal

That in a King's dull Night-cap you repoſe,
And with a *regal* 'Kerchief wipe your noſe;
Too honour'd that you ſtill enjoy the place
Which *Mordaunt* oft has curs'd, and *Mordaunt*'s race *.

Believe me, your unknown and vulgar Name †
Was never meant to flouriſh into fame.
---No more among the clouds attempt to roam,
But ſcold your wife, and tyrannize at Home:

royal rags does not appear to be very great: nevertheleſs, I have been preſent when a Slave of St. James's glowed with Importance from an impudent expoſure of the Tail of his Shirt, to ſhew an aſtoniſhed Company the Crown and G. R. which were worked upon it.

* This Gentleman is of a very reſpectable family in the County of *Warwick*, and was, as many of his Anceſtors had been, one of its repreſentatives in Parliament: however, from this Honour he was rejected at the laſt Election, on account of his being a Groom of the King's Bedchamber, the lower claſs of voters being artfully impreſſed with a belief that certain very obſcene duties are annexed to that Office.

† When this Perſon (for at that time he was not advanced to Knighthood) was firſt appointed to his courtly employment, no one knew who he was, or had ever heard of him; he ſeemed, like one of *Cadmus*'s Men, to have ſprung out of the Earth: however, it was ſoon diſcovered that he either was himſelf, or had married, a Relation of the *Bingley* Family, who were connected by marriage with the late Earl of Northington,---and ſo on.

Of

Of Pictures prattle; tell, for 'tis your Trade,
How *Reubens'* Colours glow,—how *Reynolds'* fade:
From Village Neighbours ſome light honours claim,
And ſpeak with Reverence of your Maſter's Name*:
Grin ſweet Importance,—*by yourſelf* repine;
But laugh in public at a verſe like mine:
And if your purſe ſhould fail,—you ſtill may flea
More Dupes beſide the K--- and *Coventry* †.

Farewel, Sir JAMES!---tho' you'll not think me ſo,
I am my Country's Friend, and no man's foe.

* From Sir J——s's deſcription of the reverence with which he thinks the ſacred Name of Majeſty ſhould be mentioned (ſee his Defence), I ſhould really ſuppoſe that, if he had been a Papiſt, he never would have ſpoke of his Maſter without making the ſign of the Croſs.

† While Sir J—— reſided at Venice, ſeveral Cargoes of Vertu were ſent from thence to the Q——'s-Palace.—And it is equally certain that, ſome Years ago, he ſold a Collection of Pictures to the Earl of C——— for ſeveral Thouſand Pounds, the real value of which was then well known to every one but the Noble Purchaſer.

But while the blood-streams in my arteries glide,
Ne'er will I my unsheath'd resentment hide,
When *British* Folly stoops to *Scottish* Pride:
While Britons are by Villain-Statesmen led,
Like senseless Drunkards reeling to their Bed:
While the same voice which *sells a Monarch's Fame*
Its venal Slander flings at CHATHAM's Name *.

11 : 7 : 49

* That *Huzzas* have been purchased for *Parliament-street*, and *Plaudits* for the *Theatre*, is well known; nay, in the late military Expedition, the same Care for his M———'s Glory has been exerted.---It may, therefore, be naturally supposed that the hireling voices which are applied to the purposes of *political Flattery*, may be equally useful in the business of *political Detraction*, unless the ministerial policy, in fashion, of *dividing places*, should operate, in this particular, to the employment of distinct People in these honourable Commissions.

FINIS.

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